

**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**FINAL Key Meeting Outcomes
July 17, 2009**

**Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center Auditorium, Channel Islands National Park
1901 Spinnaker Drive • Ventura Harbor, CA**

*Note: This document will be posted on line at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>.
Audio recordings of this and other Council meetings are available upon request to
michael.murray@noaa.gov.*

Attendance: At peak, 15 of the Council's twenty-one voting seats were present (see attached attendance roster). Six seats were absent for the day: California Resources Agency, California Coastal Commission, Minerals Management Service, Chumash Community, California Department of Fish and Game, and Commercial Fishing. Public attendance varied from 2 to 10 people.

Administrative Business and Announcements

The draft key outcomes from the March 2009 meeting were adopted as final.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Chris Mobley highlighted several items in the Superintendent's Report (provided to all SAC members and the attending public, and available at <http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/super.html>).

Council Member Announcements

A number of Council members shared announcements (unrelated to meeting agenda items). Audio recordings are available upon request.

Ship Strike Reduction Case Studies

CINMS Resource Protection Coordinator Sean Hastings provided a summary presentation on three case studies, and SAC Conservation Working Group member Shiva Polefka summarized a fourth study. Presentations are available by request from sanctuary staff. The four case studies presented were:

- Protecting Right Whales by Reducing the Risk of Mortality by Ship Strike in the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and on the Eastern Seaboard, USA
- Vessel Management Tools to Reduce the Risk of Humpback Whale Harassment, Injury and Mortality in Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska
- Protecting Humpback Whales by Reducing the Risk of Mortality by Ship Strike in the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary
- Smog, Soot, and Cetaceans? Effective strategies for reducing environmental harm from commercial shipping in Southern California: An examination of vessel speed reduction efforts at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

Drawing on the four case studies, Sean summarized several possible recommendations for reducing ship strikes in the Santa Barbara Channel. These included improving understanding of large cetaceans in the channel; comprehensive vessel monitoring via AIS data, acoustic monitoring and aerial monitoring; mariner education, outreach and training; continued engagement with the maritime industry; exploring the use of Seasonal Management Areas and Dynamic Management Areas (as is done on the east coast for protecting right whales); a potential slight northward shift of the traffic separation scheme within the Santa Barbara Channel; vessel speed reductions; exploring incentives to alter vessel traffic dynamics; and transitioning from incentive-based voluntary measures to mandate-based frameworks. The Council discussed these points and provided feedback. Council member suggestions included, but were not limited to: increasing monitoring to track whale distribution in the Channel; furthering consideration of a larger shift in the location of shipping lanes; determining speed

regulations that the shipping industry can and would comply with; recognizing that Seasonal Management Areas provide the benefit of consistency to help with ship trip planning; and being mindful of important recreational fishing areas (e.g., the “Dome”) when thinking about any shifts of the shipping lanes. Sean requested that all Council members submit any additional comments to staff and SAC Subcommittee members by August 15.

Public Comment (morning)

Jackie Dragon from Pacific Environment recommended that the SAC include a clear and prominent recommendation for ship speed reduction, noting that it could also help address pollution and noise concerns.

Michael Smith from Gray Whales Count stated that monitoring is an essential component to understanding impacts to all whales. He asked whether programs at the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary monitor whales other than right whales, to which Shannon Bettridge from the National Marine Fisheries Service responded that they do monitor other whales, but that the speed advisories were only for right whales.

Ship Strike Panelist presentations and discussion

The following panelists described their work with this issue (presentations available upon request):

- Shannon Bettridge, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources, presented work done along the East Coast and at/near the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary to protect Right Whales, including monitoring, education, speed controls, and measures to shift ship traffic away from high concentrations of whales.
- T. L. Garrett, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association, spoke about the challenges, such as scheduling port calls, and opportunities, such as education, in working with the shipping industry. He emphasized the willingness of the industry to work with agencies and other stakeholders on this.
- Wayne Tober, Operations Manager, Maersk, spoke about the opportunities to work with Maersk shipping line and the viewpoint of the problem from the shipping line’s perspective.
- Tom Murphy, Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, provided a presentation about the effects on air quality from shipping, and the types and numbers of ships transiting the Santa Barbara Channel, as well as the types of emissions.
- John Calambokidis, Cascadia Research, spoke about his work researching humpback and blue whales in the Santa Barbara Channel over several decades, including tagging work that is providing interesting results about how and where the whales are spending their time.
- Megan McKenna, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, provided a presentation about her work recording whale sounds and ship traffic, and her analysis on ship speeds which shows that ships do not slow down significantly when notices are in place requesting voluntary speed reductions.

The presentations were followed by discussion between the panel and Council members. Key points included:

- Recommendations must address ship strike avoidance during both the day and night. There are technologies that exist that could aid mariners at night, such as night vision goggles.
- High density whale areas near shelf breaks could be highlighted on nautical charts.
- Shipping industry representatives support shifting the Traffic Separation Scheme over vessel speed reductions. However, shifting the TSS could take years. Therefore, a preliminary action is needed.
- Greater efforts to educate mariners are needed.
- Focused research efforts should continue.

Summer 2009 Whale Season Update

- Sean Hastings reported that concentrations of whales have been spotted in the southbound shipping lanes and may indicate a need to move to Scenario 2 in the response plan utilized by CINMS and NMFS (10 knot voluntary speed recommendation).
- Sean and Julie Bursek provided an update on current outreach to shipping industry, including a flyer under development by members of the Council’s Sanctuary Education Team (SET).

CINMS Enforcement Working Group Report

The CINMS enforcement working group recently approved a draft plan. Working Group chair Dayna Matthews (from NMFS Office of Law Enforcement) presented the plan to the Council to seek input and feedback. The plan describes partners, sanctuary issue priorities, patrol priorities, directed enforcement actions, and timing of enforcement efforts. The Council had some questions for Dayna and generally expressed support for the plan.

Public Comment (afternoon)

Jessie Alstatt with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper stated that the whale distribution maps that are distributed widely could be a good opportunity for education and outreach. Also, Jessie stated that the fate of air emissions from ships is unknown but could be contributing heavy metals to surface waters of the sanctuary, and as such could be a focus of sanctuary research.

Shiva Polefka with the Environmental Defense Center stated that Council should make consideration of budget a higher priority. Shiva stated that there is a need for better information on whales in the Channel, that the Sanctuary and NMFS have a legal obligation to protect whales, and that they are not able to do that because of budget constraints. Shiva also reminded the Council that they had previously approved a water quality needs assessment report that called out atmospheric deposition as an issue, yet this is not being monitored. Shiva expressed that there is a lot of volunteer effort going into management advice and the Council should address NOAA leadership to ask for resources for the sanctuary so that it can fulfill the recommendations made by the Council.

Sarah Wilken with NMFS stated that the whale sightings maps, which show opportunistic sightings, would be more useful if they could show the track lines of the vessels and aircraft. That way, she explained, we could also see where effort was made and where whales were not seen. Also, she commented that we should not assume that all whale strikes are from ships, or that they happen within the Santa Barbara Channel, or that whales showing evidence of blunt trauma constitute proof of a ship strike.

Jonathan Weber asked if the ship captains have the authority to slow down in the shipping channel and Wayne Tober answered that yes, the ship captains have that authority.

Proposed Support Letter for NOAA Twin Otter Aircraft

A draft letter, circulated to Council representatives before the meeting, was unanimously approved by an 11-0 voice vote. The letter describes the importance of NOAA aircraft use for the sanctuary, and requests that NOAA allocate flight hours for Twin Otter west coast sanctuary missions.

Future Meeting Schedule

- Friday September 18, 2009 (SAC meeting, Santa Barbara)
- Friday November 20, 2009 (SAC meeting, Ventura)

Meeting Attendance Roster (July 17, 2009):

Kathleen Fitzgerald	Tourism	Present
Andrea Mills	Tourism - Alternate	Absent
Debra Herring	Non-Consumptive Recreation	Present
Perry Ferguson	Non-Consumptive Recreation - Alternate	Present
Capt. Richard McKenna	Business	Present
Vacant	Business - Alternate	---
Linda Krop	Conservation	Present
Greg Helms	Conservation - Alternate	Present
Bruce Steele	Commercial Fishing	Absent
Vacant	Commercial Fishing - Alternate	---
Capt. David Bacon	Recreational Fishing	Present
Merit McCrea	Recreational Fishing - Alternate	Absent
Maria Petueli	Education	Present
Jose Chicote	Education - Alternate	Absent
Dr. Robert Warner	Research	Present
Dr. Mark Steele	Research - Alternate	Present
Phyllis Grifman [Council Secretary]	Public At Large #1	Present
Amy Spandrio	Public At Large #1 - Alternate	Absent
Eric Kett [Council Chair]	Public At Large #2	Present
Dan Powell	Public At Large #2 - Alternate	Present
Jacy Ontiveros	Chumash Community	Absent
Alan Salazar	Chumash Community - Alternate	Absent
Peter Fischel	NOAA Fisheries	Absent
Elizabeth Petras	NOAA Fisheries - Alternate	Present
Russell Galipeau	National Park Service	Present
Vacant	National Park Service - Alternate	---
CDR Jason Collins	US Coast Guard	Present
LTJG Brittany Steward	US Coast Guard – Alternate	Absent
Dr. Fred Piltz	Minerals Management Service	Absent
Donna Schroeder	Minerals Management Service - Alternate	Absent
Steven Schwartz	Dept. of Defense	Absent
Walt Schobel	Dept. of Defense - Alternate	Present
Marija Vojkovich	CA Dept. of Fish & Game	Absent
John Ugoretz	CA Dept. of Fish & Game - Alternate	Absent
Brian Baird	CA Natural Resources Agency	Absent
Amy Vierra	CA Natural Resources Agency - Alternate	Absent
Steve Hudson	CA Coastal Commission	Absent
Barbara Carey	CA Coastal Commission - Alternate	Absent
Dianne M. Black	Santa Barbara County	Present
Susan Curtis	Santa Barbara County - Alternate	Present
Lyn Krieger	Ventura County	Absent
Marilyn Miller	Ventura County - Alternate	Present
Chris Mobley	Channel Islands NMS [non-voting]	Present
Paul Michel	Monterey Bay NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Karen Grimmer	Monterey Bay NMS - Alternate [non-voting]	Absent
Maria Brown	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent
Brian Johnson	Gulf of the Farallones NMS [non-voting]	Absent